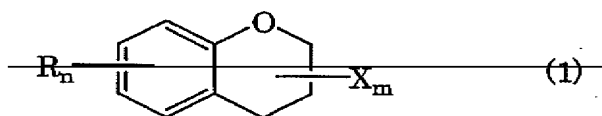


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings and all prior versions, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A method for producing an optically active chromancarboxylate, comprising a step of esterifying a racemic chromancarboxylic acid in an organic solvent comprising an alcohol and with a water content of at most 0.5% by weight, in the presence of ~~a biocatalyst, the racemic chromancarboxylic acid~~ being represented by the formula 1:



wherein R is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, an amino group, a cyano group, a chloromethyl group, a trifluoromethyl group, a carboxyl group, a carboxymethyl group, a carboxyethyl group, a carboxyphenyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted alkyl group or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl group, and a plurality of R groups, if any, may be the same or different; X is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, an amino group, a cyano group, a chloromethyl group, a trifluoromethyl group, a carboxyl group, a carboxymethyl group, a carboxyethyl group, a carboxyphenyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted alkyl group or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl group with the proviso that at least one X is a carboxyl group, a carboxymethyl group, a carboxyethyl group or a carboxyphenyl group, and a plurality of X groups, if any, may be the same or different; m is an integer of from 1 to 5; and n is an integer of from 0 to 4 an immobilized lipase which is derived from microorganisms belonging to the genus *Candida*, wherein the chromancarboxylic acid is selected from the group consisting of chroman-2-

carboxylic acid, 6-hydroxy-2, 7,8-trimethyl-2-carboxymethylchroman, 6-hydroxy-2, 7,8-trimethylchroman- 2-ylpropionic acid and 6-hydroxy-2, 5,7,8-tetramethylchroman-2-carboxylic acid, and wherein a concentration of the alcohol in the organic solvent is from 1 to 10% by weight, to form an ester of an enantiomer of the racemic chromancarboxylic acid, said ester being said optically active chromancarboxylate.

2. - 5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently amended) The method according to claim [[5]]1, wherein the alcohol is methanol, ethanol, n-propyl alcohol, isopropyl alcohol, n-butyl alcohol or isobutyl alcohol.

7. (Currently amended) The method according to claim [[6]]1, wherein the alcohol is methanol.

8. and 9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 9~~ claim 1, wherein the chromancarboxylic acid is 6-hydroxy-2,5,7,8 -tetramethylchroman-2-carboxylic acid.

11. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein after said step of esterifying, a mirror image, of the chromancarboxylic acid which has been converted into the optically active carboxylate, remains, and the method further comprising comprises a step of separating [[a]]said mirror image of the

chromancarboxylic acid which ~~[[is]]~~has been converted into the optically active chromancarboxylate₁ from a reaction production solution after the esterification.

12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a step of hydrolyzing the optically active chromancarboxylate.

13. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein only one enantiomer of the racemic chromancarboxylic acid is esterified in said step of esterifying.

14. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein said immobilized lipase is a biocatalyst which is capable of enantiospecifically esterifying only one enantiomer of the racemic chromancarboxylic acid in the organic solvent comprising the alcohol.

15. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein said step of separating said mirror image of the chromancarboxylic acid which has been converted into the optically active chromancarboxylate includes adding sodium carbonate to remaining chromancarboxylic acid, after said step of esterifying, to form a sodium salt of the remaining chromancarboxylic acid, said sodium salt being transferred into an aqueous layer.

16. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein during the step of esterifying, water is removed such that said water content is at most 0.5% by weight.

17. (New) The method according to claim 7, wherein the chromancarboxylic acid is 6-hydroxy-2,5,7,8 -tetramethylchroman-2-carboxylic acid.

18. (New) The method according to claim 17, wherein after said step of esterifying, a mirror image, of the chromancarboxylic acid which has been converted into the optically active carboxylate, remains, and the method further comprises a step of separating said mirror image of the chromancarboxylic acid which has been converted into the optically active chromancarboxylate, from a reaction production solution after the esterification.

19. (New) The method according to claim 18, further comprising a step of hydrolyzing the optically active chromancarboxylate.